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Civil Rights Activist Ella Baker To Be Topic of Feb. 2 Talk at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Marilyn DeLaure, assistant professor of communication studies at Cal Poly, will present “Planting the Seeds of Change: Ella Baker's Radical Rhetoric” from 11 a.m. to noon Thursday, Feb. 2, in Room 227 in the Erhart Agriculture Building on campus.

DeLaure will explore American civil rights activist Ella Baker's central role in establishing the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

“Baker's contributions have gone largely unnoticed, partially because she rejected the ‘charismatic orator’ model of social movement leadership,” DeLaure said. “Instead, Baker employed a variety of rhetorical strategies in organizing communities from the bottom up, empowering ordinary people, ‘especially the young and the poor,’ to engage in collective political action.”

DeLaure earned a Ph.D. in rhetoric from the University of Iowa and taught at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania before coming to Cal Poly in 2003. Her research interests include civil rights rhetoric, performance studies, and the discourses of consumerism.

Her talk is part of the Cal Poly Women's Studies Faculty Lecture Series. It is free and open to the public. For more information, contact the Women's Studies office at 756-1525 or womst@polymail.calpoly.edu. More information is also available online at <http://www.calpoly.edu/~womst/>.

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